

## **Highlights: In Brussels, Trump Scolds Allies on Cost-Sharing, and Stays Vague on Article 5; Live Briefing**

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**Highlight:** President Trump, in Belgium on the fourth leg of his overseas trip, met with NATO and European Union leaders. Analysts said expectations were low.

### **Body**

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On the fourth leg of a grueling overseas trip, President Trump [lectured NATO allies in Brussels](#) on not spending enough for collective defense, and declined to plainly endorse Article 5 of the alliance's founding treaty, which states that an attack on any member is an attack on all.

For some of the European leaders, testing Mr. Trump seemed to be as important as finding common ground with him, [amid anxiety](#) about their relationship with a leader who had dismissed the alliance as “obsolete” and called the Belgian capital [a “hellhole”](#) after a terrorist attack.

Earlier, Mr. Trump met with Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council, and Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission. Mr. Tusk said afterward that there were differences of opinion over Russia, but that when it came to Ukraine, “it seems that we were on the same line.”

Analysts said [expectations were low](#) that Mr. Trump and European leaders would agree on issues like [climate change](#), trade and terrorism. (He also shared [an eyebrow-raising handshake](#) with President Emmanuel Macron of France.)

In the wake of Mr. Trump's suggestions that the alliance was not doing enough against terrorism, [NATO](#) announced that it would formally join the fight against the Islamic State.

Mr. Trump chastises NATO allies on military spending.

If there was any real drama over Mr. Trump's visit, it concerned whether he would go off script on the question of Article 5. He had been expected to explicitly endorse the principle in a speech when he unveiled a Sept. 11 memorial — a piece of twisted metal from the World Trade Center — outside NATO's new building.

But in his speech before the leaders, including Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#) of Germany, he did not explicitly do so. Instead, Mr. Trump offered a vague promise to “never forsake the friends that stood by our side” in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks — a pledge that White House officials later said was [an affirmation of mutual defense](#).

(At one point, as the leaders lined up for a photo, Mr. Trump appeared to [push](#) [aside](#) Prime Minister Dusko Markovic of Montenegro to get to the front.)

Did Trump just shove another NATO leader to be in the front of the group? [pic.twitter.com/bL1r2auELd](#) — Steve Kopack (@SteveKopack) [May 25, 2017](#)

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The only time NATO has invoked Article 5 was to defend the United States after the Sept. 11 attacks. More than 1,000 non-American soldiers from NATO countries have died in Afghanistan in the name of Article 5.

The leaders had also wanted him to say something critical about Russia and its annexation of Crimea, but Mr. Trump has been pretty quiet on that topic, too.

What he has been vocal about is pressing NATO allies to pay what he considers their fair share of the alliance's running costs. Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, traveling with Mr. Trump to Brussels, said the president would have blunt words for the leaders of other NATO members on that issue.

And he did, criticizing the other leaders assembled behind him for not contributing 2 percent of their gross domestic product to their defense, as the allied nations had agreed.

—Steven Erlanger

Russia was a sticking point, Mr. Tusk says.

When Mr. Tusk emerged from an earlier meeting with Mr. Trump and Mr. Juncker, there were clear signs that they had differences of opinion over Russia.

"Some issues remained open, like climate and trade," Mr. Tusk said shortly after the meeting at [European Union](#) headquarters here. "And I am not 100 percent sure that we can say today — 'we' means Mr. President and myself — that we have a common position, common opinion, about Russia," he added.

Mr. Tusk, a former prime minister of Poland, did say that "when it comes to the conflict in Ukraine, it seems that we were on the same line."

Donald Tusk: "you know mister president we have two presidents in the EU" Donald Trump: "I know that" JC Juncker: "there's one too much" [pic.twitter.com/nhpGIVruhZ](https://pic.twitter.com/nhpGIVruhZ) — Cédric Simon (@Cedsimon) [May 25, 2017](#)

The leaders also found agreement on counterterrorism. "I'm sure that I don't have to explain why," said Mr. Tusk, in an apparent reference to the terrorist attack in Manchester, England.

European leaders are trying to persuade Mr. Trump not to withdraw the United States from the 195-nation Paris Accord, one of several issues on the agenda for an organization that Mr. Trump has called into question with his support for Britain's decision to leave and for populist euroskeptics like Marine Le Pen, the French leader of the far-right National Front.

Mr. Trump's formal introduction to the complexities of the European Union began on Thursday with a cordial handshake and a walk through a forest of flags.

The American president was guided along a red carpet through the recently completed headquarters of the bloc, where each of the 28 member states flies its national flag. (Britain, of course, is negotiating its divorce from the bloc.)

The building, called the Europa, is meant to represent a new start for the Union, the organization that Mr. Trump has called into question with his support for Britain's decision to leave and for populist euroskeptics like Marine Le Pen, the French leader of the far-right National Front.

Mr. Juncker said agreement was reached during the meeting with Mr. Trump to hold talks on trade matters during "the next few weeks, in order to come closer together."

He gave no indication whether the coming talks could unfreeze the efforts begun under President Obama to reach a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership that would drastically lower trade and regulatory barriers between the European Union and the United States.

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At one point, Mr. Juncker also offered a characteristically droll remark about Mr. Trump: “I hope he hasn’t sent a tweet about me yet.”

—James Kanter

Trans-Atlantic tensions, and a white-knuckled handshake.

But if Mr. Trump’s European hosts hoped that his visit to Brussels would thaw the ice left over from the dismissive comments he made about the European project during the 2016 campaign, the atmosphere before the morning meeting suggested the trans-Atlantic tensions hadn’t entirely vanished.

As they waited for Mr. Trump and Mr. Tusk, the American and European delegations did not say a word to each another, clustering in groups on the opposite sides of a rectangular conference table.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis chatted with Gary D. Cohn, the director of the National Economic Council, and Dina Powell, a deputy national security adviser. Across the table, the European Union’s high representative, Federica Mogherini, huddled with her aides.

When Mr. Tusk arrived with the president, he spoke of how important a day this was for the European-American relationship. “Thank you very much,” Mr. Trump said, but he was otherwise silent as he gazed at a forest of cameras and boom mikes arrayed at one end of the room.

After the meeting, Mr. Trump headed to the Belgian residence of the United States ambassador, where he had a working lunch with Mr. Macron. Mr. Trump, who had appeared to favor Ms. Le Pen, Mr. Macron’s opponent, showered the French president with praise for his election win.

Mr. Macron, he said, “had a tremendous victory, all over the world they’re talking about it.”

Speaking in French, Mr. Macron said at a news conference that there had been differences during his meeting with Mr. Trump, but also a spirit of pragmatism.

“I met an effective and open partner,” said Mr. Macron. “We don’t necessarily interpret things in the same way, but we were able to speak very frankly.”

He said there was agreement to strengthen the joint fight against terrorism. That was “a step in the right direction,” he said. The two leaders also discussed an “inclusive diplomatic road map” for Syria, Mr. Macron said.

Asked about whether he had persuaded Mr. Trump to maintain the United States’ participation in the Paris climate agreement, Mr. Macron said he respected Mr. Trump’s decision to review the agreement but also made clear that a large gap between the two sides remained.

But [\*it was their handshake\*](#) that raised eyebrows.

The 70-year-old American and the 39-year-old Frenchman grabbed each other’s hands in what began as a manly greeting and ended as a kind of good-natured death grip. Jaws clenching, faces alternating between smiles and grimaces, the two men shook until Mr. Trump’s knuckles turned white.

At one point, the president tried to pull away, only to have Mr. Macron clasp his hand even harder and keep pumping. Finally, the second time Mr. Trump pulled away, Mr. Macron let him go.

—Mark Landler and James Kanter

Meanwhile, Mr. Obama gets a warm welcome in Germany.

The former president basked in the affection of Berliners and returned the favor on Thursday during an appearance with the German chancellor, endorsing Mrs. Merkel’s refugee policies as she seeks a fourth term. In the process, he took a swipe at his successor.

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"We can't hide behind a wall," Mr. Obama said when discussing the difficulties of leading nations through war, peace, migration and climate change. His remark seemed clearly aimed at Mr. Trump, who has vowed to build a wall along the United States border with Mexico.

Mr. Trump was not mentioned once during the 90-minute Obama-Merkel appearance at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

Mr. Obama, 55, and Ms. Merkel, 62, were celebrated by tens of thousands of people to Protestant church celebrations of 500 years since Martin Luther began the Reformation. Mr. Obama received an even warmer welcome than the German leader did, and stirred a particularly rousing reception when he mentioned his wife, Michelle.

The appearance affirmed Mr. Obama's status as Europe's favorite American leader. While he reminded his large audience (the event was broadcast live on German television) of how he had quested for peace, Mr. Trump was in Brussels urging the NATO alliance to do more in the war against the Islamic State.

—Alison Smale

NATO says it will formally join the coalition fight against ISIS.

The announcement by the Atlantic alliance's secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, was another gesture toward Mr. Trump.

"This will send a strong political message of NATO's commitment to the fight against terrorism," Mr. Stoltenberg said. But a message is what it mostly was. The United States, after all, formed the coalition, which it leads and runs out of its military headquarters, without major NATO input, though numerous member nations are also part of the coalition fighting the Islamic State.

NATO has had a small mission in Iraq to train soldiers there and will enhance it, but will much change now that it has agreed to formally join the coalition? Probably not.

—Steven Erlanger

Belgians take to the streets in protest against Mr. Trump.

Amid the pomp and ceremony, however, ordinary Belgians gave Mr. Trump a rather chilly reception.

[Thousands marched on Wednesday](#) to protest his presence, carrying signs that read "Solidarity with the women of the whole world," "No ban, no wall" and "Trump go away." At one point, #TrumpNotWelcome was the No. 1 trending hashtag on Twitter in Belgium.

Five Greenpeace [activists climbed a crane](#) to hoist a [sign saying "Resist"](#) near the American Embassy.

And the Ancienne Belgique concert hall put up a sign that said, "[Don't duck for Donald](#)."

—Claire Barthelémy

The president's response on Manchester: 'We will win this fight' against terrorism.

Ahead of the NATO meeting, Mr. Trump met the Belgian prime minister, Charles Michel, on Wednesday and [spoke at a news conference](#) in which he denounced those who were behind the bombing attack in Manchester, England, that left 22 people dead, including children, and about 60 others injured.

President Trump in Belgium: "We will win this fight" against terrorism <https://t.co/STiziNKrGO>  
<https://t.co/sgvnHyLbGn> — CNN (@CNN) [May 24, 2017](#)

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After complaints from Britain, [he also called for an investigation](#) into the release of “sensitive information” to the news media about the investigation.

What do European Union leaders really want from Mr. Trump?

Simply put: [More Mike Pence](#).

Ms. Mogherini, the European Union’s foreign policy chief, said at a [news conference on Wednesday](#) that she would welcome the same “message of continuity” about trans-Atlantic cooperation that Vice President Pence brought by visiting Brussels in February, soon after Mr. Trump took office.

Mr. Pence’s visit was “a clear sign” of “willingness to work together,” Ms. Mogherini said.

Her comments represent a widely held hope in Brussels that Mr. Trump will avoid bashing the European project in favor of constructive dialogue on global challenges.

Ms. Mogherini said she wanted Mr. Trump to discuss carrying out the Paris agreement on climate change, which he has previously threatened to abandon, and investing in multilateral organizations like the United Nations, where the Trump administration wants further funding cuts.

Even if the Trump administration was set on revising American policies, Ms. Mogherini said, it was important to have “an open and constructive dialogue.”

—James Kanter

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